

As we honor the memory of the 1.5 million Armenians whose annihilation began 83 years ago, we must also remember the countless other victims of "ethnic cleansing" around the globe, and recommit ourselves to the effort to punish those responsible for these unspeakable crimes.●

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF SRI LANKA

● Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of independence of Sri Lanka. I believe it is appropriate that we so mark this occasion by offering our congratulations to her excellency, President Kumaratunga and the people of Sri Lanka.

In the five decades since Sri Lanka gained its independence from British colonial rule, Sri Lanka has held regular national elections as well as provincial and local government elections. The most recent parliamentary elections were held in August 1994, and the third presidential election was held in November 1994.

Sri Lanka has prospered economically since 1977, when it introduced economic liberalization policies which shifted the economy away from state controls, subsidies and public sector involvement to a market-oriented system in which private entrepreneurship flourishes. The U.S. is Sri Lanka's largest trading partner, accounting for 30% of the latter's exports, and over 90 U.S. companies have invested in Sri Lanka, with a heavy concentration in mining and textiles.

U.S. official relations with Sri Lanka date back to 1850 when John Black, an American merchant residing in Colombo was appointed the first American commercial agent in Galle. Fifty years later the agency moved to Colombo and became a consulate. It subsequently became an embassy in 1948 after Sri Lanka became independent.

The exchange of bilateral visits has played an important role in strengthening the cordial relations between our two nations. Then Secretary of State John Foster Dulles visited Sri Lanka soon after its independence, and since that time members of this body as well as our colleagues in the House have regularly visited this lovely country.

Despite its prosperity and commitment to democratic principles, Sri Lanka has been plagued for many years by two domestic insurgencies, one mainly Tamil in the North, and the other mainly Sinhalese, in the South. The result has been the loss of many lives and heavy damage to property. The government has reiterated its commitment to addressing grievances articulated by these groups through dialog and the process of negotiation. Four rounds of unconditional talks with the Tamil Tiger separatists were held following the President's election in November 1994, and a cease fire was subsequently reached. This however,

was breached by the separatists after 3½ months when they resumed their terrorist activity.

As a result of these terrorist actions at home, Sri Lanka has placed counter terrorism at the forefront of its foreign policy. Sri Lanka was the Vice Chair of the United Nations Ad hoc Committee on Terrorism and played an important role in the drafting of the Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombing, being the first to sign the Convention at United Nations Headquarters on January 12, 1998.

I am therefore, Mr. President, pleased to acknowledge this occasion by expressing best wishes to the Government and people of Sri Lanka as they celebrate 50 years of independence. I know that we all look forward to continued cooperation and friendship with the Government and people of Sri Lanka in the years ahead.●

RECOGNIZING ARIZONA'S TOP TWO 1998 YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

● Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I would like to congratulate and honor two young Arizona students who have achieved national recognition for exemplary volunteer service in their communities. Eliza Robinson of Scottsdale and Jason Kelley of Prescott have just been named State honorees in the 1998 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program, an annual honor conferred on only one high school student and one middle school student in each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Ms. Eliza Robinson is being recognized for her many years of dedication and service to the Multiple Sclerosis Society, culminating with a term as spokesman for that wonderful organization.

Mr. Kelley is being recognized for his efforts to start a Youth Chamber of Commerce. Jason's organization will give other young people in his community the opportunity to participate in Chamber events similar to those sponsored by their local Chamber of Commerce, as well as interact with business leaders from the area.

In light of numerous statistics that indicate Americans today are less involved in their communities than they once were, it's vital that we encourage and support the kind of selfless contributions these young people have made. People of all ages need to think more about how we, as individual citizens, can work together at the local level to ensure the health and vitality of our towns and neighborhoods. Young volunteers like Mr. Kelley and Ms. Robinson are inspiring examples to all of us, and are among our brightest hopes for a better tomorrow.

The program that brought these young role models to our attention—The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards—was created by the Prudential Insurance Company of America in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals in 1995

to impress upon all youth volunteers that their contributions are critically important and highly valued and to inspire other young people to follow their example. In only three years, the program has become the nation's largest youth recognition effort based solely on community service, with more than 30,000 youngsters participating.

Ms. Robinson and Mr. Kelley should be extremely proud to have been singled out from such a large group of dedicated volunteers. As part of their recognition, they will come to Washington in early May, along with other 1998 honorees from across the country, for several days of special events, including a Congressional breakfast reception on Capitol Hill. While in Washington, ten will be named America's top youth volunteers of the year by a distinguished national selection committee co-chaired by our colleagues, Senators BOB KERREY of Nebraska and TIM HUTCHINSON of Arkansas.

I heartily applaud Mr. Kelley and Ms. Robinson for their initiative in seeking to make their communities better places to live, and for the positive impact they have had on the lives of others. I also would like to salute four other young people in my state who were named Distinguished Finalists by the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards for their outstanding volunteer service. They are: Chrissy Weiers of Maricopa, who has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to make her peers aware of the dangers of drugs; Christina Barela of Glendale, who helped organize a day camp for elementary school girls; Purvi Patel of Yuma, who designed and built a park adjacent to her school with five peers from the Gifted and Talented Education Program; and Tirzah Orcutt of Phoenix, who created a volunteer project to paint a mural on the Veterans Administration Medical Nursing Home Care unit in Phoenix.

All these young people have demonstrated a level of commitment and accomplishment that is truly extraordinary in today's world, and deserve our sincere admiration and respect. Their actions show that young Americans can—and do—play important roles in their communities, and that America's community spirit continues to hold tremendous promise for the future.●

GORTON AMENDMENT TO H.R. 2646

● Mr. FAIRCLOTH. Mr. President, I rise to explain my support of Senator GORTON's amendment to the Coverdell A+ Accounts legislation. I was pleased to support the Gorton amendment because it returns the decision making authority over our children's education to parents, teachers, and locally elected school boards. After more than 30 years of top down control, it is clear that the hundreds of federal education programs and one size fits all policies from Washington, D.C. are not working.